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The

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Teacher



THE CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHER

VOLUME XIV No. 2

FEBRUARY 1945

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The Church School Teacher

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Teaching—Plus

By GLADYS PETERSON

THE GUIDANCE function of education has been receiving much attention and emphasis in recent years. Because the traditional school was forgetting to give aid in many of life's areas to its pupils, weaknesses in pupil growth became evident. The so-called guidance movement came into existence as an attempt to remedy the deficiencies which were obvious. It began with the giving of assistance in the making of vocational choices. From then on there has been an increase in the types of assistance. Today this aspect of education has become almost all-inclusive.

A. J. Jones in his *Principles of Guidance* gives a typical statement

on the subject as found in educational literature:

"The entire realm of education in so far as it is organized to assist individuals in their choices and adjustments is guidance, whether directed in such a way as to enable the individual to make his own choices without assistance or in the actual assistance of the counselor at the time the choice is made."

Every teacher is a guidance worker and considered as the important member of the guidance staff. She has the closest contact with the pupils and this naturally affords her the most opportunities to be of assistance to them. Teachers have always been counselors, but in the guidance-permeated

school they are more consciously aware of this position. They are given special training which aids them in doing more effective counseling. They become familiar with counseling materials and techniques and with the services which can supplement their efforts in helping the individual pupil.

Does this point of view in education have any possibilities in the Sunday school?

Consider the high school student. This is the age when he is moving away more and more from the sheltered influence of the home. He is being called upon to make many important life choices which determine the path he will travel the remainder of his life. He is in great need of a counselor who can gain his confidence, offer sympathetic understanding of his problems and assist him in the objective study of these problems. Very often the high school student seeks this counselor outside of his home. This is somewhat natural, because he is seeking to become independent—even of home control.

What greater service can the church give youth than to strengthen its offerings in this area? Here is a marvelous opportunity for the Sunday school teacher of this age group. Finding in his teacher the

ready friend which youth needs will go a long way toward making his church seem very worth while.

One teacher in the senior department has found that special assignments in connection with the regular Sunday morning lesson have been the means through which she has developed into a counselor. She invited the pupil who had been assigned the special report to meet with her at a certain time during the week for the purpose of discussing the material which was being prepared. These meetings have then given opportunity for a visit with the pupil. As he opened up to her, she found herself becoming an interested listener, and, eventually, a counselor of most of the members in her class.

This teacher was challenged to become an ardent student of the needs and problems of the adolescent. She found much available literature and many practical helps in the field. She discovered that never before had she found herself in a better position to be the finger pointing youth to the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world and thereby give him the key to the solution of his problems. Only the Christian has the core around which can be organ-

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Reach the Parents

A NOTED educator (Kirkpatrick) has said that if you wish to educate a child properly you must begin with his grandparents. Doubtless he means that the cultural and spiritual environment into which a child is to be born and reared is of supreme importance in shaping the child's character and personality.

But we can not go back to re-educate the child's grandparents. What they have done, has been done; what they neglected or failed to do can not suddenly be supplied at the present stage.

However, it is not too late to do something with the child's parents, even though it is very late, and anything that is done should be done with the urgency of an emergency.

True it is that parents have a most serious responsibility before both God and men for the training of their children. When it comes to their spiritual nurture, this is especially true. Training for a vocation and general social competence has been largely transferred to the public schools; and the schools are in a position to accept a large share of responsibility for such work, since they have the

child under their control a large part of nearly every day. On the other hand, the spiritual training of children can not be so easily transferred. To assume that it can be transferred to the Sunday school is sheer folly. The very name Sunday school implies something removed from the important affairs of life, and the usual one-hour-once-a-week session represents only about 1/200 of the week's time. If the child is to sense the importance of the Christian heritage and to be helped to make it an essential part of his life, much attention must be given to it in the home, both casually and deliberately.

But "reaching the parents" is not as simple or easy as it sounds. Surely parents are not a kind of faucet, requiring merely to be turned on. Unfortunately there are many of these faucets not now connected with the reservoir. Turning the faucets produces no flow of water; they are still dry! And no matter how much the church and its teachers denounce un-co-operative parents, the faucets remain dry.

The church itself is largely responsible for this sad state of affairs. Either it has disconnected the original piping or it has failed to make the connections. Surely

the fact that many parents today, reared and confirmed in the church, are proving to be uninterested and incompetent raises grave questions about the kind of Christian training they received some years back.

To remedy the situation, there are two things that must be done. First, we can try to supply to parents some of the knowledge and understanding and sense of values that they now lack. Some will not respond, but others will. In the second place, we must try by the help of God to rear a new generation that will become more definitely Christian parents than some of the present ones have been, more zealous for the kingdom of God, better informed, more interested in spiritual values.

Then there will be something to draw from when the faucets are turned on.

Noted Leader Passes

We have been saddened by news of the passing of Dr. Charles P. Wiles of the United Lutheran Church. For many years he was an editor in the service of the Parish and Church School Board of his communion, having taken up the work when it was in its beginning stage.

Those of us who are younger in parish education looked upon Dr. Wiles as our dean. There was every reason in the world why we should so regard him. His ability as an editor was outstanding. His understanding of Christian education was thorough and sound. His manner was mild but persuasive. Everything that he said and did inspired the rest of us. We shall miss him, but we shall also be thankful for having known this noble Christian.

Evangelism Emphasized

The mere fact that Jim and Margaret attend Sunday school seems to be taken by some parents as a guarantee that their spiritual life is being adequately cared for. Unfortunately, they overlook both the fact that not every Sunday school is highly efficient and the hard truth that no child's spiritual life is adequately nurtured by a half-hour or hour on Sunday morning without accompanying Christian influence in the home.

After all, the Sunday school teacher can not be a child's spiritual foster-parents.

"The need," declares Dr. Harry C. Munro of the International Council of Religious Education,

is for a revival of the evangelistic spirit in the Sunday school, the church, and the home. Winning the commitment of boys and girls to Christ and His way of life must be considered the most important thing that a Sunday-school teacher, a minister, and parents can do. Upon that personal allegiance to Christ will depend what the coming generation does about world problems."

Just now there is much talk of child evangelism and many movements are at work to win children for Christ. Some are sound, but some show elements of high pressure revivalism and unconcern for careful teaching that make one skeptical.

Surely any program of Christian work with children and youth must undertake two things: first, instruct in the plain facts and teachings of the Word of God; secondly, confront pupils with the need for doing something about these facts and teachings. They are not mutually exclusive. Both are needed.

Leadership Guides

Leadership guides are available for study of the teaching of the

primary, junior, and intermediate courses in the Christian Growth Series. They come in mimeographed form, ranging in length from 13 to 17 pages, and may be secured from Augustana Book Concern at 15 cents a copy. It should be pointed out that these guides are so prepared that they can be used for First or Second Series leadership education courses. They treat such subjects as: understanding the pupils of the particular age group, aims of the Christian Growth Series, materials for teaching the course, methods for teaching the particular age group, preparing for a session, proper grading, teaching a lesson, and the like. The Christian Growth Series has now been in use for several months and if no classes have yet been conducted by a school to guide the teachers in the proper use of the courses, they should be held immediately.

Where no formal classes can be held, the pastor or the superintendent of the department can give informal instruction. Replacements and substitute teachers are always needed. They should never simply be handed the book and told to teach a class. They need guidance. These leadership guides will provide the basis for such instruction.

Only Thirty-five Percent

PROTESTANT and Catholic churches and Jewish synagogues of Minneapolis have only 35 percent of the city's population over 13 years old in their membership, a month-long survey of the city's religious trends revealed.

At the same time, about 80 percent of Minneapolis' adult residents think they "belong" to the churches because they attend occasionally or were members at one time.

All this indicates, according to Dr. H. Paul Douglass, New York City, editor of *Christendom* magazine, who directed the survey, that Minneapolis congregations need to do a better public relations job in enrolling as members people now "living off the benefits of the churches."

"It is evident," Dr. Douglass said, "that the churches have failed to apprise people of their need for church membership."

Minneapolis Protestantism, Dr. Douglass' report said, is characteristically using small and frequently ineffective units, many of which are not producing. Average size of Protestant churches in Minneapolis is 425 members.

Many average only 100 members. There are 27 churches with membership of more than 1,000 each.

Dr. Douglass recommended that churches located in clusters should co-operate both religiously and in community projects.

Common Ground

IF the postwar world is to develop social, political, and economic unity it must build upon something deeper and stronger than a desire for peace and prosperity. This is becoming increasingly evident.

The desire for peace and prosperity may be entirely selfish, and the selfishness of one group set over against the selfishness of other groups can only create suspicion, strife, and the destruction of both peace and prosperity.

In other words, the surest way of getting peace and prosperity is by recognizing that there must be justice, freedom, and good will for all. In all forms of corporate life, whether in the church, community, or among nations, it is impossible to operate effectively unless there be a common fundamental basis which all recognize and help maintain. We believe that only the gospel of Christ with its high em-

phasis on justice and good will can provide a sound basis for peace and prosperity. If only we could learn to spend as much time, energy, creative genius, and money on it as we must now do on battle-ships and bombers!

REGISTRATION in Sunday schools in New York has increased 100,000 since released-time instruction was adopted less than three years ago, according to Dr. W. M. Howlett, secretary of the Christian Education Division of the Protestant Council of New York.

Protestant Sunday school attendance increased 28,000 this year over last year, he reported. Released-time instruction was a "big factor" in the gain, which is the first in 20 years, Dr. Howlett said.

Educating a Whole Nation

OVER in England one of Mr. Churchill's "war aims" is the reconstruction of education. Under the leadership of Richard Austen Butler this aim is being realized in a remarkable way.

Mr. Butler's avowed purpose is "to secure for children a happier

childhood and a better start in life." "Upon the education of the people of this country the fate of this country depends," is his motto. "In the youth of the nation," he says, "we have our greatest national asset. Even on the basis of mere expediency, we can not afford not to develop this asset to the greatest advantage. It is the object of the present proposals to strengthen and inspire the younger generation.

Of course, the idea of re-educating a whole nation is not new. Hitler did it after the last world war, with tragic results to both his own and other nations. Luther and Melancthon, on the other hand, did a good job when they took measures that finally meant the Christian education of every child in the Protestant part of Europe. The most significant thing in the English plan is not a new type of indoctrination, for the nation guards jealously its concepts of freedom and good order, but the extension of privilege to the underprivileged.

For seventy years, seventy per cent of the children of England have left school at fourteen, and only twelve per cent have entered a high school. The new plan makes secondary (higher) education avail-

able to all without payment of fees.

The reason is ingeniously set forth in a statement by the late Archbishop of Canterbury, released shortly before his death:

"It is now established that what is learnt till the fourteenth birthday and after that is neither studied nor practiced any further is largely forgotten by the twentieth birthday. The return for expenditure incurred up to fourteen begins to come, as regards many aspects of it, after sixteen, and then only if the education has been continued. If raising the school-leaving age were opposed on the ground that we can not afford it, that opposition would be 'penny wise, pound foolish.'"

All of this causes one to ponder over the practice of many of our churches of permitting if not encouraging the ending of Christian education at the time of confirmation. This practice is challenged by such questions as the following:

1. If boys and girls stop learning in religion at the age of fourteen, will not the religious knowledge of the adult congregation tend to remain at the level of fourteen-year-olds?

2. If it is important in the modern world to continue the learning period in public schools until the pupil is at least sixteen years of age, is it not equally important to continue it in Christian education?

3. If the period between fourteen and eighteen is unusually valuable both for acquiring new knowledge, putting to practical use what has already been gained, and for shaping the personality of the individual, why does not each congregation do more for its youth of high school age?

This is serious!

A new generation is in the making.

What will the church do to help make it a Christian generation?

Mistaken

"I don't believe I need to study very much," said a young teacher to the superintendent. "The Lord has opened my mouth to speak."

"It seems to me there was also an occurrence of that kind back in the time of Balaam," retorted the superintendent.

The Teacher

By JOHN F. PALM

THE School Inspector spoke respectfully, but firmly:

"I am exceedingly sorry, Miss ——, to feel obliged to warn you about your teaching, but the course you are following is contrary to the distinct law of this State, and I can not permit the studies you are giving the children in this school to go on."

The man paused, with evident embarrassment, while the teacher sat at her desk looking at the Inspector with a surprise that was mingled with real perplexity and doubt.

"Do you mean that I can not tell the children in my class about Jesus, and explain to them some of the things He said? Why, I thought——"

"Yes," said the Inspector gently. "What is it you thought?"

"Why, I thought what I was doing was what the children needed, and I have given some of the lessons about Jesus out of school hours. They have seemed so eager to have them. I——"

"Well, you see——" The Inspector was evidently puzzled him-

self, being a member of a church, and having three children going to school. He was a very practical and simple-minded man. "You see, the State law says that no religious teaching is permitted in the public schools of this State, and the Bible can not be used as a textbook. You have been reading from the Gospels and telling the children what Jesus said, and the State law is explicit on that point."

The word "explicit" was an unusual word for the Inspector to use, but the teacher seemed to know what he meant by it. She was still looking perplexed and distressed over what the Inspector had told her.

"Then do you mean that I must not tell the children anything more about Jesus and His teachings? I don't call it Religion; I just call it LIFE. Jesus, I am sure, didn't call it anything else."

"I am sorry, Miss ——, but the State law calls what you are doing 'putting religion into the curriculum,' and I haven't any choice in the matter."

The Inspector used the word

"curriculum" with a little more assurance than he had used the word "explicit," because it was more a part of his vocabulary. The teacher smiled slightly, but her brow wrinkled again as she ventured to say: "Are there any complaints on the part of the parents of the children, or anyone else, about my talking to the children about Jesus?"

The Inspector coughed a little. "No, I can't say there are any complaints. In fact, my children speak of the way that Jesus taught His disciples. They love to hear His stories and about His life. But the law says that it can't go on, and that is an ultimatum."

He used the word as if it were the last word he could say. As he rose to leave, he said: "I am sorry, Miss ——, but I am sure you will understand. I don't want to see you get into trouble, but I can not approve or recommend teachers who are breaking the State law. You understand, I have no option in the matter."

And feeling that with the word "option" he had made the matter clear, the Inspector said good-by and left Miss —— there alone, very thoughtful and sorrowful.

And then, as if it had been a bit of heavenly poetry wafted into

the schoolteacher's plain and homely earthly life, it seemed to her as she sat there meditating, someone came in quietly and sat down on one of the pupil's plain seats near the open door. The sunlight filtered through a row of elms across the schoolyard and fell on the visitor's head and made a halo there. It made the teacher think of a picture she had in her room at home, of Christ at Bethany, talking to Mary, the sister of Martha. He was sitting, in the picture, under a grape arbor, and He looked just as teachers like her often thought of Him.

She was not frightened or even very much excited, as she thought it over after getting home that evening. It all seemed so natural and just what she needed after the Inspector had gone away. And as the Visitor began to talk to her, it seemed to her that He had simply stopped as He was passing down the street, and had come in to rest Himself a moment, because He did look tired, and the teacher found herself wondering if He had not been very hard at work somewhere that day.

He was saying: "The law of this State can not prevent your living the Life for your children."

The words came to her like a

question and a pleasant answer to her grief over what the Inspector had said.

"No, it can not stop me from living the Life," she found herself saying. "Nothing can stop that!"

"You love these children, do you not?" the Visitor was saying. "I always have loved children. I have said: 'Suffer little children to

come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven.' Live the Life! The children will read it."

Her Visitor rose to go out, but at the door He stopped to thank her for the kindly place in which He had rested Himself, and His smile was very like heaven as He went away.

A Sunday School Being Reborn

By HERMAN G. NELSON

TO COME unexpectedly upon a Sunday school that has recognized its shortcomings and charted a new course to revitalize itself is a thrilling experience. I had visited the Immanuel Lutheran Sunday School at Elmdale and Greenview Avenues, Chicago, a year ago and had felt that it lacked not only the attendance but the spirit which should characterize a Sunday school.

On returning to Immanuel Sunday School in November 1944, I sensed that an about-face had been made somewhere along the line. I found that new life and new ideas had been transfused into the old Sunday school, even though the

outward setting was unchanged. I found an old Sunday school being reborn.

There are many Sunday schools which have been standing still or slipping during the past decade. They have lacked vision. They have not kept pace with the modern teaching methods of the public schools. They have become back numbers. Immanuel had been in this class but now it was revitalizing itself by introducing new methods and seeking new approaches to interest city youth. I predict excellent results and shall want to revisit this school in a year.

Like many other schools with a

long tradition, Immanuel Sunday School had got into a groove. It had begun to slip, or at best was just maintaining its own. People had excused it by the fact that its members lived far away, that many had moved from the vicinity of the church and under war conditions could not get their children to Sunday school.

Members awakened to the realization that for Immanuel congregation to remain strong it could not live alone in the glory of its past history but would have to rally and train a new generation. Out of a complete analysis of the Sunday school came a new approach and a rebirth.

Probably the most interesting innovation at Immanuel has been the introduction of a Saturday school for children of the neighborhood and congregation. Today 50 to 60 children between the ages of 8 and 13 gather at the church every Saturday morning from 9 to 11 o'clock. The first half-hour is spent for a worship service. A flannelgram presentation of "Together We Build the Church" follows every other Saturday. On alternate Saturdays, the children are shown movies on the life of Christ.

Then follows a half-hour instruction period. Weekday school

material prepared by the Commission on Parish Education of the American Lutheran Conference is used. The last half hour is devoted to handwork, Bible projects and religious art. Here the children get the chance to use their own ingenuity and imagination. On alternate Saturdays, in place of handwork, the group becomes a Junior Mission Society.

The confirmation class joins with this group for the opening half-hour of worship. The pastor then takes the class for an hour and the parish worker, Miss Lauree Nelson, who has complete charge of the Saturday school, instructs it for the second hour.

Children who attend Saturday school are among the most faithful in attendance at Sunday school. It was started only last September but the results have already been striking.

Motion pictures having religious value are frequently shown with telling effect on Sunday mornings. The Sunday school at Immanuel was recently given a movie projector and screen. This has opened up a new avenue of instruction.

Sunday school at Immanuel lasts for one hour. The younger children have their worship in the church auditorium while the older

children and Bible classes meet in an upstairs assembly hall. It was in the latter place that I made the observation that Immanuel children truly are taught how to sing. They have a well-trained director, and the church organist accompanies them on the piano. For ten minutes of the opening service, this group sings with beauty, spirit and devotion. It is a pleasure to listen to them sing and it is an inspiration to join them in the songs. Ten minutes are usually devoted either to announcements or to presentation of a short movie. The next 40 minutes are given over to class instruction, the children being dismissed directly from their respective classes. There are individual classrooms for this group as well as for the younger children who meet downstairs.

Stewardship has recently been stressed with good effect. It was found that the Sunday school collection averaged nine cents a Sunday per pupil and that seven cents of this was used for books, papers and materials. By placing emphasis on the need to give for others and not just for self, the collection increased an average of one cent per pupil per Sunday. Children were informed that in place of two cents going "to others" the Sun-

day school was contributing three cents per pupil.

Duplex envelopes are being introduced at Immanuel to give the children an opportunity to designate how much of their offering they want to give for their own school and how much "for others." It has been proposed that the children's offering "for others" go to one institution or cause for two months and that a change be made at each two-month interval. The children will be fully informed and the plan calls for presentation of a movie about the institution or cause for which the money will be used, such movie to be shown the Sunday before the children are asked to begin contributing for that purpose.

Many new ideas are being introduced at Immanuel. A children's library has been started. Books will be introduced to the children at Saturday school by the reading of a chapter. Children will then be invited to take that or some other book home to read.

A teachers' training class is being started. The need is felt that teachers for a growing Sunday school must be properly trained, that they can not just be lifted from a Bible class and put in charge of a group of youngsters.

Older girls also are being used by Miss Nelson in her Saturday school and here they get valuable teaching experience.

Birthdays of all children are given proper recognition. A birthday card is sent to the child, this card informing him that his birthday will be recognized the following Sunday.

Teachers' meetings are held once a month on a Sunday evening, following vesper services in the church. At least 15 minutes of practical instruction is offered.

The new Sunday school lesson materials have been introduced and the superintendent, Walter Siljestrom, serving for the third year, remarked that he and the teachers are very happy about it. "We really go for it. We find it is just what we have wanted," he remarked.

One Sunday morning service each year is set aside for the installation or dedication of teachers and officers. This serves a double purpose: to impress upon teachers the seriousness of the task they have undertaken and to impress upon the congregation the extent of the work being done by the Sunday school.

Every effort is being made at Immanuel to check Sunday school absenteeism. If a child is absent, a card is immediately sent to him. If the child fails to appear a second Sunday, a telephone or a personal call is made. Immanuel leaders feel that once a child has been interested in joining a Sunday school, an interest has been evidenced that should be nurtured and no child should be allowed to slip away because of carelessness or indifference on the part of the Sunday school.

The Rev. C. O. Bengtson, D.D., is pastor of Immanuel. He has entered into the spirit of rebuilding the Immanuel Sunday School with the same spirit as the officers and teachers. Recently he interested a group of children in the Sunday school to be baptized at a Sunday morning service. Before doing so, however, he brought all the children together one Saturday for instruction and the following Saturday he met with both the mothers and children.

It is easy to predict that Immanuel Sunday School will make big strides forward as its new spirit permeates the community it serves.

Strengthening Rural Sunday Schools

By PAUL M. KAMFE

THE THOUSANDS of little highland Sunday schools that dot the countryside have contributed more to the upbuilding of the church than they are generally given credit for. These "presto-change," combination, double-purpose, one-room style country churches and Sunday schools, comparable in many ways to the little red schoolhouses, may be called the "grass roots" of the church.

In spite of themselves these small Sunday schools have produced some invaluable effects upon the personalities of young rural folk. Christian character has been and is today the outstanding achievement. Needless to say, abiding convictions have taken root in the lives of many of these rural Sunday school pupils. They have received what could possibly be called a peculiar spiritual "set" and interest in and loyalty to the church.

Three-fifths of the young people having received basic training in Christian principles from these noisy, ill-equipped Sunday schools take up membership in our city

churches later in life. The fact is not often recognized that many of the people who fill the pews of the city churches are those who received their early religious education in rural Sunday schools. The constant flow of people from the open country to the city has generally superseded the flow in the opposite direction.

The open country will perhaps always be looked upon as the feeder to the city. However, much concern has arisen over the increased farm-to-city movement. The question that is being raised today is, What will become of the rural church if this trend continues at the present rate? What will become of those so-called inefficient Sunday schools? This problem should enlist the concern of every rural pastor and teacher.

The migration to the city can not be hedged entirely, nor would it be a wise thing to attempt such action. There will always be those boys and girls who see their futures awaiting them in the city. This is as it should be. But the trend has advanced to the critical

stage when the rural Sunday schools are declining in membership even though the birth rate in the rural areas continues to double that of the urban areas.

The rural Sunday school must be strengthened if it is to continue the good work it has done in the past. Of late the rural Sunday schools have weakened in this capacity to the extent of becoming almost stagnant.

What can be done to curb this trend? What can be done to balance the rural-urban movement to its normalcy so as to retain the irreducible minimum of intelligent and Christian rural youth necessary to maintain a strong rural church? Experience has shown that the majority of rural Sunday schools could perhaps improve along three lines of action, the first of which shall be presented in this article.

The ailment which commonly becomes chronic in older congregations is having its turn with many rural churches and Sunday schools. The "first love" has been lost, the "first love" of which the angel speaks in Revelation 2. 4. Read it. Ask yourself, is our Sunday school evangelistic? Or have we left our "first love," that of bringing lost souls to the Saviour?

Neither the rural church nor the Sunday school can afford to tolerate the old-time trait of independence that once characterized rural people. Anyone can see that it would be disastrous for even the farmer today to nurture this trait. The farmer has learned that he needs other people, and that other people need him. Likewise the rural Sunday school, whose strength arises out of her divine commission to "teach all nations" and "preach the gospel to every creature."

It can generally be said that the people living in the open country because of their proximity to each other know about all there is to know of their neighbors except whether they go to church, or their children to Sunday school. Where the spiritual welfare of each is concerned, the interest falls short. In this the farm people are apt in minding their own business. Here the trait of independence has continued unhampered. The rural church and Sunday school have followed the same path.

If the rural Sunday school is to grow and exert its former Christian influence upon both the urban and rural societies, it must become evangelistic. With farm tenancy on the increase, bringing in new families with children and taking

away others, the rural Sunday school will have to inaugurate the "door-bell ringing" practice of the city missions. In many sections the condition has reached the point where new tenants have gained predominance in numbers over the old line families, many of whom have retired to the city after leaving their farms to renters. Shall we say that these people do not belong to us? If such an attitude is taken, then let us prepare the rural Sunday school for burial, and along with it the rural church.

The responsibility for the life of the rural Sunday school falls upon the local pastor and his teachers. The lead in missionary activity should always be taken by the pastor. Let him apply the Lord's great command to the people living in the community, the poor and underprivileged, the broken homes, the needy aged, the erring and the wayward.

Let the pastor instruct his teachers in evangelistic methods suitable to the particular area of activity. This will require a thorough study of the local situation. No two rural communities are exactly alike. Each must be analyzed to discover its peculiar needs. Moreover, it will not help greatly for the pastor and his teachers to depend much

on guidance from a book on evangelism, for most books written on that subject have the urban centers in mind.

Study the community, its people, its customs, traditions, boundaries, the religious background of the people, their habits, and their needs. Know the people you are to work with. The fundamentals of winning souls for Christ are found in His Word and are the same for both rural and urban people. Once the fundamentals of soul winning are ingrained in the heart and mind of the workers, it would be worth while to make use of a few of the recently published books on rural sociology, such as: *God's Back Pasture* by Arthur W. Hewitt, *Rural Life in Process* by Paul H. Landis, *The Job of the Rural Church in This Day* by Calvin Schnucker.

The church in all ages has had a special interest in the people of the soil, and not without good reason. In the rural sections of our land live millions of unchurched people. Here the church has an opportunity to work. The field is ripe for harvest. The challenge awaits the Sunday school that is aggressive for the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us move forward to accept the challenge.

Penetrating Oil

By VICTOR E. BECK

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: . . . As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the Lord commanded the blessing, even life for evermore. Psalm 133. 1-3.

AN EXPERIENCE of many years ago has remained a vivid memory. I can still feel something of the chagrin that was mine at the time. The lock on the door of my garage would not work, and I thought there was something seriously wrong with it. Consequently I had a mechanic look at it. All that he needed to do was to take his can of oil from his kit, and pour a few drops of penetrating oil into the lock. In a few minutes it was working perfectly. All that it needed was oil.

Here is a parable of life! For life can be made happier and sweeter for all of us, if we learn to be kind and gracious and con-

siderate of one another. Many years ago I heard this story: A young lady was buying a pair of shoes, and in the course of having the shoes fitted the clerk said, "Madam, your one foot is *larger* than the other." She became quite indignant, and in the argument that ensued the manager's attention was attracted. He came over, and took the situation in hand. In a few moments he said, "Pardon me, madam, but your one foot is *smaller* than the other." The result was that she bought two pairs of shoes! Both of these men had really said the same thing, but the difference lay in the way it had been said.

Here was just another instance of the use of penetrating oil, or in other words, the kind of attitude that makes it possible for people to live together in peace and harmony. We do not need to pride ourselves on being rudely truthful and unpleasantly just! There are some who do! But we can just as well be gracious in our truthfulness and gentle in our justice. We can act and speak in such a way

that our manner of life becomes a balm and a benediction to those among whom we live and move.

There are some people who are like rasps—always irritating. They seem to delight in rubbing the fur the wrong way, and in getting their fellow men needlessly wrought up. Sometimes it is even done with an air of virtue and self-righteousness. For it is possible to be pious and unlovely at the same time.

But there is no virtue in such a manner of life. Life has enough irritating experiences for all of us without anyone's consciously adding to their store. How much better, if our lives can be like the penetrating oil that helps the machinery to run more smoothly! How much more of a blessing our life will be to our fellow men, if our influence is that of bringing calm to the troubled waters, and healing to the wounded hearts! Paul exhorts: "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer each one."

In another place Paul said that he was willing to be all things to all men, if it would do them any good. This was not said in a spirit of compromise, for the Christian will not compromise with anything

he knows to be sin. But, as far as was consistent with truth and right, Paul was willing to be all things to everyone. His underlying motive was to be able to bring them to God for help and healing.

If we take time to examine life, we shall be surprised to learn how many disputes and quarrels there are in life over things that do not involve any ethical principles, but which are simply the outcome of whims and prejudices. It is in these realms that we can do a great deal to make life happier, if we exercise the spirit of reconciliation.

Jesus was willing to go to the least, the last, and the lost. In other words, He was willing to touch all of life with His ministry of love and kindness. Life was always sweeter and better where His influence had been felt.

If our times are out of joint, it simply means that there must be some among us who are willing to set them right. I have a friend in the ministry who used to say that too much of his time had to be spent patching up the broken fences. By that statement he meant that he had to give much time and effort to adjusting relations among the members of his church toward one another and toward the church.

To say that he was patching up broken fences was just another way of saying that Christians are to be healers. In the name and spirit of our Saviour and Master, we are to help to bind up each broken heart. If we have the desire and the will to be of help, we shall be surprised in our discovery of how many opportunities there will be to help. We shall also be surprised when we learn how

much good can be accomplished.

"He anointeth my head with oil," was the declaration of the writer of the Twenty-third Psalm, as he thought of the goodness of God. When we are not only the recipients, but also the channels, of the grace of God, streams of healing will flow from us to others, like the penetrating oil that silently and unobtrusively accomplishes its effective work.

I Am Parish Education

- * I am the Church at work feeding the lambs and sheep of Christ.
- * I have been born of the love of God for fallen man.
- * I am obedient to the Saviour's command, "Make disciples . . . teaching them . . ."
- * I am empowered by the Holy Spirit of God.
- * I nourish hungry souls with the Bread of Eternal Life.
- * I work through precept and through Christian worship and example.
- * I find my greatest strength in homes where young and old love to gather about the Word.
- * I thrive where people reflect God's love for His "little ones."
- * I am indispensable for the building of moral stamina and the salvation of souls.
- * I lay the foundation for a dynamic church and a strong nation.

I am Parish Education.

W. P. HIERONYMUS.

Let's Give Them Good Music

By RUBY PATTON NORDGREN

JUST LISTEN to our primaries sing!" exclaimed the young primary superintendent at St. Paul's. "They really make the walls ring, especially on the chorus of *Brighten the Corner Where You Are, Love Lifted Me, The Church in the Wildwood*, and *In My Heart There Rings a Melody*." "But after the singing," she added, "my worries start. I just can not understand why these children who sing so wholeheartedly won't be reverent during the prayers and story. It's almost no use trying to have any conversation. They are so noisy. You are an experienced teacher. What is the trouble? Please help me. I need it."

Thus spoke this eager primary teacher to a visiting friend. As she spoke, her pupils were lustily singing, almost shouting, "Oh come, come, come, come," etc.

The visitor knew the sincerity of the perplexed young leader and wished she could help. She knew that good hymns would help greatly to create the worshipful atmosphere now lacking. The pupils would enjoy good hymns if they

knew them. After all, these jazzy choruses were all the pupils knew. And where can most children learn the great and beautiful hymns? Isn't it in Sunday school? Here the words can be explained and the pupils' interest deepened with each experience of singing them.

The visitor then went on to analyze the situation.

"The responsibility," she began, "of choosing songs for the children to learn and live is a really serious one. They must be the best, hymns which help one to know God's goodness and love. This hour in the church's school should be full of opportunities for the pupil to reach toward God not only in music but also in pictures, in story, in silent and spoken prayer. What a great opportunity if the teacher could only see it!"

This teacher seemed to have no real plan, just a hodge-podge of jazzy music and cheer leading with a routine of getting up and sitting down to sing, to pray, to hear a poorly-prepared story, and then a noisy exit.

This should not be! These

chorus songs appealed to the child's sense of rhythm with emphasis on *I, me, my*. Good hymns cover a variety of subjects: praise, my needs, Scripture, creation, love of God, missionary, and so on. Most choruses this group knew had too much feeling and too little of either truth or challenge. This was one reason why the superintendent had behavior problems.

Perhaps around the campfire peppy, sentimental songs fill a need, although it is doubtful. "He walks with me and He talks with me" comes close in sentimental feeling to many of the popular June-moon-love hits. They may be indulged in by adults but have no place in the smaller children's worship service.

A good hymn begets reverence. No wonder this leader complained. The songs her pupils sang did not beget reverence. We would tell this teacher about such hymns as *This Is God's House, In Church, Praise Ye the Lord, Very Softly I Will Walk*, and many others.

A good hymn will give clear concepts of God and Jesus, and ideals toward which to work. *How Strong and Sweet My Father's Care, Learn Well One Lovely Rule, Tell Me the Stories*

of Jesus, The Word of God, Gentle Child of Nazareth, and Jesus, Our Brother are a few examples. A good hymn will also create in the singer a desire to be what the hymn suggests.

A good hymn also recreates feelings of the writer. *Holy Night, Silent Night, and O Little Town of Bethlehem* speak clearly of inner spiritual experiences of the authors.

In a good hymn the music fits the words with pleasing harmony. It does not use syncopated rhythm. Compare the music of *Brighten the Corner Where You Are* with Mendelssohn's *'Tis God Who Sends the Spring*, or *Friends Everywhere* by Mrs. Oglevee.

If we hope the child will prefer good music, good hymns, then we must train him up in the way he should go.

"I think I'll tell her about this," the visitor concluded.

And she did.

After only a few months the young superintendent of St. Paul's spoke to the teachers at Bethel.

"I see now," she said, "that the best hymns with their satisfying music and meaningful words are a stimulus for pupils to Christian behavior. They challenge us teachers, too."

Keeping the Ties

By J. GORDON CHAMBERLIN

FEW CHURCHES are without some form of Honor Roll for their sons and daughters away in military service. Parents write letters, ministers write letters, youth groups, women's societies, service men's committees write letters. Through these the church is keeping the ties of heart and memory and spirit with its members scattered around the world.

The tie of letters is not enough, however, to discharge a church's spiritual responsibility for those away, whether in military service or war work. Among many ties which should also be maintained, through chaplains, special services, missionary interest, etc., literature can be one of the most significant. What religious literature should a home church send to its members away?

There are two principles involved. First, those away are still members of your church. Just because they have chaplains does not absolve your church of responsibility. Therefore, what your church should be doing when Joe and Mary are at home is what it

should try to do now that they are away, not because we feel an urge to "do something for the boys," but because during these years of crisis and tragedy they need religious guidance and an opportunity to "grow in the faith" even more than in years of peace. The church's literature program among those gone should be a continuing one, using the same literature that the fellows and girls should go on reading when they return. This can be a significant help in their readjustment to civilian life upon demobilization—based on foundations laid while they are away.

A second principle: variety is imperative. A careful checking of the list on any church Honor Roll makes very apparent the variety among those away. Before leaving some were active in the church, others seldom attended. Some are married and have families, some were in college, some unemployed, some didn't have good reputations in the community. Is it fair to them to presuppose that all would be interested in or respond to the

same religious literature? The background, interest, age, experience and attitude of each fellow or girl should guide intelligent use of literature.

One approach for a local church might be to have a small committee of three or four individuals assigned to (a) study the list of all away—war workers, C. P. S. fellows, service personnel, (b) collect all kinds of religious literature that might be of value—tracts, magazines, bulletins, and (c) based on such analysis develop a regular program of literature distribution among members away for war connected reasons.

There are some things all can use, primarily the Bible. Every church could have a Bible Reading Circle around the world, so set up that those away and those at home could be reading the same passages each day. The minister could gear such reading to his Sunday preaching, midweek meeting or Bible study group. "Strength for Service to God and Country" is a devotional booklet for use by everyone, at home or away. Other similar books or booklets have had wide circulation.

Especially prepared for service men and women of all denominations is *Link*, issued by the Service

Men's Christian League, an interdenominational agency set up for the express purpose of promoting religious groups (similar to Youth Fellowship, Christian Endeavor, Luther League, etc.) among men and women in the armed forces. *Link* is a magazine with articles of general interest, and also contains material to guide discussion and Bible study groups. Every church could send copies to its young men and women and thus both encourage the formation of study and discussion groups and provide very interesting religious reading.

You may discover, however, that a member of your church is now in China and is near mission stations supported by your denomination. Special literature is needed. You might get a large map of the world locating your church's mission stations, put it up on a wall in the church, and mark the location of your church members. From the Board of Missions of your denomination you can obtain folders or booklets describing the type of work at each station. You might want to send suggestions of things to look for, or ask for a report back that can be used in your home church. There might be value in explaining, for instance,

the comity arrangements in certain foreign fields eliminating denominational strife and meaning that your member may never see stations supported by your church because he is in a region assisted by another denomination. He should be helped to understand that such efforts may help generate a new and intelligent interest in missions among those returning.

Are there some gone from your church who were in college and may return to the classroom? They should continue to receive any college paper or magazine issued by your church. How much easier it will be, then, to adjust to "college trends" and "college thinking." If your church does not have a magazine for students, you may obtain booklets or tracts on college life, student ideas and opinions, and send them.

Younger fellows and girls who were very active in youth groups should continue to receive youth magazines and papers. Young married men and women should receive literature about the home—keeping those away and those at home aware of the significance of the Christian home and eager to

re-establish their own homes after the war.

Surely, many in service do not know what the churches are doing to help build a just and durable peace throughout the world. Literature about the work of the Federal Council's Commission on a Just and Durable Peace, and the crusades for world order among several denominations should be part of the religious literature sent by your church to its members gone from home.

Perhaps every publisher, every special church agency, could attempt to distribute its literature to all those in military service or in defense centers. Even if the cost were not prohibitive, the approach would hardly be desirable. A wise use of literature must be an integral part of a local church's contact with its own members. Those men and women now scattered around the world will not come back to be members of some publishing concern or of an interdenominational agency—but of the home church. So it's up to that home church—constructively and continuously—to keep the ties of Christian love unbroken by time or distances.

Learning to Think

Issued by the National Kindergarten Association

By MABEL-RUTH JACKSON

WAITING at a railway station, I became interested in watching a small girl and her father who also, obviously, were passing the time until their train came. The child asked many questions—about the steel tracks, the clouds, the distant mountains—passing from one question to another so rapidly that I doubted if she were listening to the answers. Her father did not put her off but answered each question carefully in words adapted to her understanding.

"Oh, I'm tired standing!" she cried and darted off to sit down abruptly on the step of a closed side door of a building used for freight. But she jumped up in a hurry, ruefully rubbing her small rear.

"That hurt!" she exclaimed resentfully and turned to look at the step. An oblong strip of iron studded with small blunt spikes had been screwed to the top, covering it completely.

"Why did they put that there,

Daddy?" she demanded of her father, who hid an amused smile.

"Why do you think they did?" he counterquestioned.

She turned and looked again. "Well, I can't think why," she said. "You tell me, Daddy."

"That's one question you can answer yourself if you try hard enough, Anne," he said. "From now on, I'm not going to answer any questions you can find the answers to yourself."

I could see that she didn't know whether she liked that or not. It wasn't so easy to put her own brain to work as it was to let "Daddy" do it. She was trying, but in a half-hearted way; she hadn't learned to think logically.

"Please tell me, Daddy," she teased.

"I'll help you a little," he offered. "Now when you sat down there, you stood up again quickly—"

"Oh," she broke in, her eyes shining, "they didn't *want* me to sit there!"

"That's it exactly," her father answered, smiling.

"But *why* don't they want people to sit there?" came the inevitable question.

"Why does Mother sometimes shoo you out of the kitchen when she's getting a big meal?"

"Because I get in her way," Anne said. "Oh, I—"

Just then the train came in and I didn't hear any more, but the incident set me to thinking, and that, perhaps, is something I, myself a mother, hadn't practiced enough.

We see that our children have exercise to make their muscles grow strong, but how much attention do we pay to the process of strengthening their mental growth?

We read them instructive stories and try to answer their questions intelligently, but do we not sometimes forget that, primarily, education should be a whetstone to sharpen mental activities, to teach children to think for themselves—not a collection of facts to be crammed into their minds?

I heard a thoughtful man say that intellectual curiosity is a rare thing nowadays. If that is true, it is a sad commentary. It shows a lack in ourselves as parents and teachers. And it is little use to try to stimulate this ability in an adolescent when the little child has not been encouraged to use his powers of observation and has not learned to reason from the facts that are presented to him.

Activities in the Realm of Christian Education

By I. O. NOTHSTEIN

Lessons in Conducting Confirmands' Rallies. In the Synod of Ohio (U. L. C.) confirmands' rallies have now been held for about six years. In a brief checking over of the experience gained in carrying out this part of the education

program for the young people, the Rev. Carl A. Driscoll presents the following suggestions for producing the most satisfying results.

First. The best effect is produced when the areas from which the catechumens come are large

enough so that there are two or three hundred meeting at each rally point. This brings more parents and friends to the gatherings which in turn has a valuable psychological effect on the young people.

Second. Care should be exercised in selecting a church for the rally. The inspiration is more easily imparted in a small church well filled than in a large church only half filled.

Third. It is better to use the liturgy of the chief service rather than of the vesper service. This is generally better known and will be rendered in a more satisfactory way. A choir is just as essential for the rally as in a morning service. The liturgist should be fully informed on all arrangements in the host church. The preacher should be selected well in advance to give him ample time to prepare his sermon. The committee would do well to suggest the theme so as to fit the sermon into the rest of its program.

Fourth. There should be something less formal after the worship. In Ohio the Luther League has always been given the opportunity to speak a good word for its work and to pass out a memento of the occasion to each con-

firmand before the closing hymn.

Somewhere in the program there ought to be time too for presenting the youth camps and summer schools. Moving pictures, if available, would be the easiest and most effective way of doing this.

Fifth. Some kind of a follow through is advisable. The spring meeting of the Luther League districts or conferences is suggested. A special effort ought to be made to bring the confirmands to these meetings and to make them feel that they are a part of this work. Another opportunity is the annual rally of confirmation classes in the local congregation.

* * *

Fifty thousand churches in the United States and Canada used the Sunday opening the Fourteenth Annual Religious Education Week as a rallying point for fall programs and for the special recognition of teachers and leaders, with programs and conferences during the week. Two hundred governors and mayors had issued proclamations or statements commending the work. Besides nation-wide radio publicity, newspapers and religious periodicals carried several thousand articles, as well as a large number of editorials commending the observance. In the 5,564 church

schools in the United Church of Canada the emphasis of the week was on the enlistment of "Volunteers for Christian Service with Children and Youth."

* * *

Training for Visual Education. North Park College, Chicago, was recently the scene of a workshop in visual education, sponsored by the Committee on Visual Education of the International Council of Religious Education. The use of visual aids at various age levels, work in making still photographs, motion picture printing and production, were the courses offered. Two hundred interested persons from all parts of the country were enrolled for the week.

Reports are that this nationwide conference may be followed by many similar gatherings on a local scale, fostering competent use of film and photographic service in the church and Sunday school.

* * *

The Sunday School and Music. Adult choirs in churches need new recruits from time to time. Wise churches see to it that junior or intermediate choirs are maintained,

from which come most of the recruits for the senior choir. Wise Sunday schools look to the training of all vocally gifted children through the medium of one or more Sunday school choirs. These beginners' choirs will not only enhance the Sunday school worship and help to retain the teen-age young people in the school, but they will furnish the recruits for the intermediate choirs as well. A competent director, paid or voluntary, should have charge of this work.

Teaching—Plus

From page 2

ized the well-integrated personality which guidance workers set as the desired goal of development.

Good Sunday school teachers have always served in this capacity, but they have been in the minority group. The church must become more conscious of the great need of Christian men and women who will take seriously this tremendous task of counseling youth and definitely plan to enter into the training of such for its senior departments in Sunday school.



BOOKS



Religious Liberty in Latin America. By George P. Howard. The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 1944. 170 pages. \$2.00.

Teachers in the church school will profit from reading this timely revelation of the actual situation facing Protestant missions in South America. In spite of propaganda to the contrary, the heart of our neighbor to the south is open to the message of the Protestant. The indirect disclosures made by this book reveal as well the deliberate program carried on by Roman clericalism to bring the whole sphere of American culture under its influence. The teacher in the church school has responsibilities in both of these directions, to arouse the missionary spirit in the pupil and to gird the spiritual life of the child against the approaching attacks upon Christian freedom.

The author speaks generally out of the authority of many years of residence in South America. He writes specifically out of findings gathered through hundreds of interviews with South Americans

who know the mind and the heart of their continent. He concludes that Latin America is still a mission field. To date, and in spite of several centuries of Roman dominance over its religious life, Latin America is said to be "Christianity's most shocking failure." Words quoted as follows from a Spanish artist in his company indicate the whole trend of the author's findings, "The first missionaries who came to this continent simply destroyed the idols which the Indians worshiped and told them that in their place they should worship these crosses." In such a situation Christ can be nothing more than an object of blind and fearful adoration.

In a continent where the need is as crying as this, there is a great field for the gospel. Catholicism advocates the closed door against Protestantism in South America, a policy in which she is utterly inconsistent. For were the policy sound, she should withdraw immediately all her own efforts in countries where she is in the minority.

This book is exceedingly challenging in the direction of increased missionary activity, and is stimulating toward the educational task of re-examining and strengthening what we mean by religious liberty. South America needs the message of Protestantism. Protestant missions in South America must continue!

P. M. L.

Westminster Dictionary of the Bible, by John D. Davis (Revised and rewritten by Henry Snyder Gehman). Approximately 700 pp. \$3.50.

Back in 1898 the Davis Bible Dictionary made its first appearance. Because it was concise, dependable and rather inexpensive, it had a wide sale. Numerous revisions were made in order to incorporate findings of archaeology and Biblical scholarship.

The present volume represents an extensive revision and, in numerous instances, amplification of the conservative and scholarly work by Dr. Davis. The result is a very usable Bible dictionary for pastors and Bible students. Every Sunday school teacher, especially from the junior department up, needs a Bible dictionary, and we believe that this one is the best available at a popular price.

Primary Children Learn at Church, by Ethel L. Smither. Abingdon-Cokesbury. 170 pages. \$1.25.

The author enjoys high standing as a primary teacher and worker in both her own communion (Methodist) and other groups. Her book of ten chapters has been prepared to meet the needs of Second Series Courses in leadership training.

The result of the author's effort is not only a very acceptable textbook for training classes, but also a volume that any teacher of primary children will find very helpful for both systematic study and casual reading.

The Challenge of Israel's Faith, by G. Ernest Wright. The University of Chicago Press. 108 pages. \$1.50.

The author, who is Associate Professor of Old Testament at McCormick Theological Seminary, frankly recognizes that the Old Testament does not possess the last word for the faith of the Christian. On the other hand, he maintains that the Old Testament has more to say to Christians than is generally recognized. An understanding of the redemptive work of God in Christ demands a deeper

penetration into the *whole* of His eternal Word.

This volume sets forth the central propositions of the Israelite faith with clarity, vigor, and considerable fervor. In undertaking to indicate just what Israelite religious leaders believed, the author has shown what a fundamental place these articles of faith have in Christian thought and life. Such titles as: "Thus Saith the Lord," "Choose You This Day," "Obey My Voice," "Ye Shall Be My People," and "For I Am Thy God," indicate the great themes that are elaborated.

Society Kit, Volume 2. Edited by Margaret Gibson Hummel. Westminster Press. 288 pages. \$2.50.

The Society Kit, Vol. 2, is a manual packed full of interesting and timely suggestions for youth programs. The topic programs deal with subjects vital to a Christian and with the questions prevalent among young people. The topics presented fall under such general headings as "The Bible," "Christian Beliefs," "The Church," "The Christian Life," "The Christian World View," "Great Personalities," "The Seasons," and

"Special Programs." The manual also contains a section on "Worship Services," "Recreation Suggestions," and "General Plans and Ideas for Young People's Programs."

The programs are offered as a basic working unit for the committees, but on the other hand, they present sufficient material under a prepared topic to make a well-rounded and interesting meeting. Inexperienced program committees are led to self-reliance through such well-prepared helps. The thought-provocative suggestions and questions will be stimulating to the committee as well as the discussion and program groups.

A practical feature of the kit is that the sixty undated topics are printed on perforated, tear-out pages. The sixty varied topics present a choice of material to fit the changing interests and needs of the group. Although this handbook was prepared with the high-school age young people in mind, adults will also find a wealth of material that can be adapted to their needs. This "first-aid" program kit, to which experienced religious leaders have contributed, is a "find" for those who adventure in program building. CECILIA ANDERSON.